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C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBLIN 001466

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: IRISH VIEWS ON THE EU CHINA ARMS EMBARGO

REF: STATE 208511 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Jonathan Benton, reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

1. (C) On September 28, DCM reinforced with David Cooney, Political Director of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), reftel talking points and aide-memoire. Cooney said that the GOI, while fully aware of the U.S. position, could not commit to opposing the lifting of the China arms embargo within EU circles. He noted that Ireland would not sell arms to China in any event, adding that the GOI shared USG concerns about China's failure to improve its human rights record.

2. (C) In a follow-up discussion on September 30 with poloff, Niall Brady, DFA First Secretary for Asia, observed that Ireland did not favor the proposal to lift the embargo, as the GOI and Irish public shared international concerns about China's poor human rights record. He described lifting the ban as a "hard sell domestically." The GOI agreed with the U.S. position, moreover, that lifting the ban could adversely affect the East Asian military balance. Brady believed that the ban would be lifted eventually, but not before 2005 and certainly not in time for the December EU-China Summit. He noted that the EU had not yet achieved a consensus on the issue, particularly with the UK's lack of enthusiasm for lifting the ban. Like Cooney, Brady could not offer assurances that Ireland would actively oppose moves within the EU to lift the ban.

KENNY